

# MONTHLY NEWS

October 2024



Connecting our members with exceptional communication solutions with ease and integrity.

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## October is Co-op Month!

There are many reasons to celebrate in October and Co-op Month is one of them. As a Cooperative we like to recognize our members, so thank you for being a member of our cooperative. At VernonCom, it is important to us that our members are connected with exceptional communication solutions with ease and integrity. Co-op Month is celebrated nationwide during the month of October. It is an opportunity to raise awareness of a trusted way to do business, and to build inclusive communities. The phrase, "The Future is Cooperative", has been created as this year's Co-op Month theme, by the Cooperative Network.

Here are some interesting facts about Cooperatives.

1. 1 in 3 Americans are Co-op members
2. 1.2 million rural Americans are served by 260 telephone cooperatives in 31 states
3. 1 billion people are members of Cooperatives worldwide
4. Benjamin Franklin assisted in the creation of America's first formal Cooperative in 1752
5. 29,000 Cooperatives operate in every sector of the U.S. economy
6. U.S. Cooperatives generate 2 million jobs each year



To celebrate Co-op month, we are hosting a giveaway for 5 - \$100.00 bill credits. To enter, visit our website and submit your responses to the prompts in the form titled, "Co-op Month Giveaway".

Go to: [www.vernoncom.coop](http://www.vernoncom.coop)

Winners will be announced on Friday November 1, 2024.

Check out our Facebook and Instagram page to stay up to date on giveaway information throughout the month of October!



## From the CEO - Garin Mayer

Hello Everyone,  
I hope you had a chance to enjoy summer. We say it all the time, but it certainly feels like time moves faster and faster.

With all the excitement happening with the road construction in Westby, they even managed to sneak in a visit from the President of the United States! The President visited Westby, specifically Vernon Electric to unveil a grant award for green energy that Dairyland Power would be receiving. Part of this announcement was a small mention of broadband. If you recall, the Cooperative was successful in receiving a grant with the partnership of Crawford County and the American Rescue Plan Act, (ARPA) in providing funding. This grant program allowed the cooperative to pass an additional 1,000+ homes



with fiber-to-the-home. As part of the President's visit, the White House reached out to VernonCom looking for success stories surrounding that grant program. Our staff was quick to come up with several stories of how fiber-to-the home, and excellent broadband, had helped residents in the grant area. Members of particular mention are Emile and Camille Smith. The Smith's have been instrumental in pushing for broadband in Crawford County for years, leading up to the project as part of the 3C Co-op. Their work paid off in helping make the grant possible. When asked if they would be willing to provide information to the White House, the Smith's jumped at the chance! Not only were they able to attend the ceremony, but they met with the President and had a follow up video call with him, where they were able to convey how much broadband means to rural Wisconsin families.

Our community has enjoyed broadband for years, however, certain areas in Crawford and Monroe County haven't shared in that enjoyment. Building fiber-to-the-home, business or farm, is a game changer for them. They can now work from home, complete school work, enjoy streaming, and maybe even have a video call with the President!

As I've mentioned before, we're proud to provide world-class broadband to our members, and we're always excited to extend that network to areas where it's so desperately needed. We will vet out opportunities and continue to try to add more broadband to our corner of the world.

**Thank you for being a Cooperative member.**

## Cyber Security - KnowB4

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are becoming increasingly popular with individuals and organizations. While AI tools can be helpful, it's important to consider the security risks of sharing sensitive information and data with these tools.

### Storing Your Information

AI tools collect and store large amounts of the information shared with them. Depending on the AI tool you use, your user data, conversations, feedback, and location can be collected and even reviewed by human AI trainers. These tools use this shared information to improve the content they generate. If the AI tool you use experiences a breach, your sensitive information could land in the hands of cybercriminals.

### Spoofed AI Tools

Cybercriminals can also spoof legitimate AI tools or even create their own. If they trick you into using their versions of AI tools, you could be sharing information directly with cybercriminals and putting yourself at risk. With these malicious AI tools, cybercriminals can create specialized prompts and inputs designed to manipulate you into sharing sensitive information.

### What Can I Do to Stay Safe?

Follow the tips below to keep your information safe when using AI tools:

- Use well-known and secure AI tools. Verify that the AI tools are legitimate and choose tools that have been developed with data security in mind.
- Limit the information that you share. Only share details that are necessary for the AI tool to function and exclude any identifying information.
- Do your research. Familiarize yourself with the privacy policies of AI tools to understand the data privacy risks.



## TV Changes Coming

Effective November 12, 2024, we will be adjusting our TV channel lineup. We aim to reduce the number of channels from two (SD and HD) to one television network. Standard Definition (SD) channel numbers will now carry High Definition (HD) content. For example, instead of WKBT Channel 8 for SD and 308 for HD, we will only have channel 8, which would be in HD. This allows members to have better picture quality, while we optimize our network performance. Although this transition may require some adjustment for members who are accustomed to using HD channel numbers, the long-term benefits outweigh the initial inconvenience.

HD	Channel Network	L	S	B	E
8	8	•	•	•	•
9	NEWS NATION	•	•	•	•
10	THE CW	•	•	•	•
12	COZI	•	•	•	•
13	WEAU NEWS	•	•	•	•
16	16 Weather Channel	•	•	•	•
19	19	•	•	•	•
20	MeTV	•	•	•	•
21	NEWS 13	•	•	•	•
23	11	•	•	•	•
24	10	•	•	•	•
25	FOX 43	•	•	•	•
26	PBS	•	•	•	•
27	PBS Wisconsin	•	•	•	•
28	create	•	•	•	•
29	MLB Network		•	•	•
30	BIG NETWORK		•	•	•
31	Bally SPORTS WISCONSIN		•	•	•
32	Bally SPORTS WISCONSIN		•	•	•
33	ESPN		•	•	•
34	ESPN 2		•	•	•
35	ACCN		•	•	•

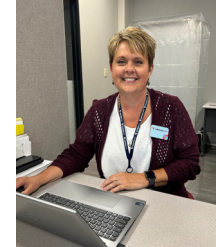
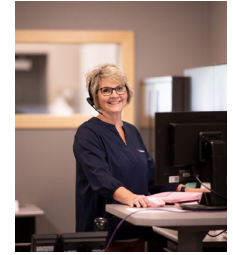
Example

## Breast Cancer Awareness

October is not only Co-op Month, but Breast Cancer Awareness Month. October 18th is recognized as "Wear it Pink Day", in support of Breast Cancer Awareness. To show our support to those suffering from this disease, and the need for a permanent cure, consider wearing **PINK!**



## Customer Service Week



### Customer Service Week October 7 - 11

Customer Service is what makes VernonCom stand out from our competitors. Meet our Member Support team. These employees work hard everyday to serve our members with the best service we can offer. The knowledge they have about our services are a significant contribution to our day-to-day operations. Taking new orders, changes to existing accounts, payment processing, problem solving, answering questions about construction, and the list goes on for their job description. This experienced Member Support team has been employed for an accumulation of 87 years! We want to express our gratitude to our Member Support Representatives for giving our members the care they deserve.

## Sun Outages

It's that time of the year where you could see disruption in your TV signal due to sun outages. During these times you could experience degraded and complete signal loss for our TV services as the sun moves through our satellite reception arc.

Date	Start Time	End time
Oct. 6	1200	1600
Oct. 7	1200	1600
Oct. 8	1200	1600
Oct. 9	1200	1600
Oct. 10	1200	1600
Oct. 11	1200	1600



## Business Spotlight



This month we are celebrating one of Westby's most cherished establishments, Nordic Lanes. Nordic Lanes is much more than just a bowling alley; it's a place where both locals and visitors can enjoy a great meal and have a wonderful time. Established in 1979, it was reopened in 2012 by Scott and Susan Sordahl. Recognizing the bowling alley as a vital asset to the community, the Sordahls were committed to restoring its significance in the area. Nordic Lanes is a popular destination, offering mouthwatering pizza, burgers, sandwiches, Friday fish fries, and other classic bar foods. Bowling is available daily, making it a perfect spot for families, group events, or casual evenings. Nordic Lanes is open every day from 11 am until closing, with the kitchen serving food from 11 am to 9 pm. The Sordahls take pride in their dedicated staff, many of whom have been with them for almost twelve years. Despite the challenges posed by road construction, Nordic Lanes remains optimistic about the future. The establishment relies on VernonCom internet for its essential operations, including the ATM, credit card machine, free Wi-Fi for customers, and the technology needs of the bowling alley. Scott and Susan want to express their immense gratitude to the community for their unwavering support and dedication to their business over the years, attributing much of their success to the loyalty of their patrons. For a chance to win a \$35.00 gift card to Nordic Lanes go to: <https://vernoncom.coop/spotlight>

## Employee News



Participating in parades and the Vernon County Fair is a fantastic way to connect with our members and show support for the community. Our employees were there to participate and have a little fun too.



103 N Main Street  
Westby, WI 54667

### Lobby Hours:

8:00 am - 4:30 pm  
(M-F)  
(608) 634-3136  
[www.vernoncom.coop](http://www.vernoncom.coop)



### Payment Options

Go To: [www.vernoncom.coop](http://www.vernoncom.coop)  
and click "Pay Now"  
Call (844) 827-4766  
(Have your account number)  
EFT (Automatic Payment) - Sign  
up and get a one time \$5.00 credit.